EASTERN MILLWRIGHT
Regional Council
"The difference is in the training"
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Testimony of Robert Loubier in Support of Senate Bill 374, Licensing of Millwright Contractors and Journeymen

Good afternoon, Chairman Doyle, Chairman Baram, members of the General Law Committee. My name is Robert Loubier, I live in Somers, Connecticut and am the Executive Secretary Treasurer of the Eastern Millwrights Regional Council, the union that represents Millwrights in the Northeast. I would like to touch on the changes that have taken place in millwright work over the last quarter century that have driven the need for regulatory oversight of millwright work. Beginning in 1991, unions representing Millwrights, and five other trades, began having tripartite meetings with contractors and plant owners in the nuclear power industry about ensuring that workers on nuclear power plants had the skills needed to do the work efficiently and safely. Initially, these tripartite meeting focused on standards for apprentice training and then, in 1996, began developing a millwright qualification program, which outlines the minimum qualifications for millwrights working in the industry. Since then, contractors working in nuclear power generation have carried over the requirements into fossil fuel generation. The requirements that millwrights must meet have continued to proliferate so that now millwrights need to be well versed in the operation of gas and steam turbines, rigging, and OSHA safety regulations. To work on power plants, millwrights are required to successfully complete and be tested on about 260 hours of coursework. Part of this training includes traveling to a national training center, to work hands-on with the same kinds of turbines that will be encountered in the field.

There are three ways that a millwright can qualify to work on nuclear generating equipment—by having completed 10,000 hours of millwright work before the program starting date in 1996, by completing a four year millwright apprenticeship program or by passing a millwright qualification test with both written, and hands-on components.

Modernizing millwrights skills started with a discussion of apprentice training which has evolved into an increasingly sophisticated training program provided during a four-year apprenticeship. By the time that apprentices graduate, they have received training on the areas required by power plant contractors, as well as training on pumps, alignment, scaffolding and other areas.

The trend in the industry is toward greater requirements of training and demonstration of skills. Millwright must possess licenses in several states for various parts of the trade. For example, in